



Lucy Smith Graduate Software Engineer

Can you tell us a bit about your background and what led you to pursue a degree in Software Engineering? My parents were actually the driving force of how I got into computing, when picking my GCSE'S my parents forced me to do computing as "technology is the future", and as much as I hated being told what to do at the time, I ended up really enjoying the course and ended up being the first girl to take A-Level computing in my school and then went onto study Computing at the University of Worcester.

What were some of the most challenging or rewarding aspects of your time at the University of Worcester? I really enjoyed the group work as this allowed me to focus on my leadership and communication skills, which at school were not the best as I was quite shy. I think the main challenge was finding the right balance between working and getting the grades I knew I could get, while also taking advantage of all the extra things university has to offer, such as sport clubs, societies and meeting new people.

How did you find out about Savient? I met James Stillwell at my university showcase, and I found the CSR side of the business extremely interesting and was (and still am) super interested in the product side of things such as Savitrace.

What advice would you give to someone who is considering or looking for a graduate opportunity following university? Any advice to support them? Networking is super important, if you have events where you can meet up with potential employers go and see if you like the vibe of the companies and ask if they would like your CV. Finding a graduate job (in my opinion) is truly about creating opportunities for yourself.

What was it like transitioning from university to your first professional role as a Graduate Software Engineer at Savient? Admittedly this transition has been the biggest change for me, and it has been super overwhelming, but this has been in the best way possible. Everyone I've spoken to at Savient is super welcoming and is so



willing to help me learn and grow. If someone told me when I first started how much I was going to learn, I wouldn't believe you.

Can you tell us more about your experience so far with the Savient Academy and how the mentoring program has supported your development? I have learned so much from a variety of different people throughout the organisation and I think that has been super useful, instead of doing an online course or an external training session, which do have their place and can be useful in the right situation, you learn directly from the people who use this stuff in Savient, which is great because I'm very much so a person who needs to know why/when what I'm learning needs to be used, but also knowing who you can go ask about different topics such as going to Tom if I have a question about JavaScript or going to James when I have a question about git.

You're working alongside other early-career professionals like George, Ben, and Archie. How has collaborating with your peers helped you develop your skills? In university we had group work assessments and things like that, but at university you all have a similar skillset as you've learned from your course, whereas at myself, Archie, Ben and George all have different knowledge from different projects and backgrounds, so it's been interesting to learn different things from my peers as we all have different experiences and ways of doing things.

As someone just starting your career in software engineering, what are your professional goals for the next few years? I've been really interested in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence for a few years now, most of my knowledge is around basic ML algorithms and my dissertation was on how LLM's (such as ChatGPT) will impact the education system, so I would love the opportunity to use my knowledge in a real-world project. But also, to continue learning more about other kinds of AI, how these can be used from a business perspective.

You've joined WiTCH - Women in Tech & Cyber Hub - how has being part of this community supported your career development and personal growth? I don't think I ever truly realised the importance of having women in your chosen field to look up to. The longer I studied computing the more I noticed there were not as many women in this subject. Even at a university we all pick different options for our subjects, so we'd end up in different classes, so I was the only girl in most of my classes most of the time, especially in second and third year. Therefore, joining WiTCH has been eye-opening and has truly been an inspirational experience. Being able to talk to the amazing, confident, successful women at WiTCH and having that



network of people who understand what it's like in tech and want to support you to do well has just been so wonderful.

What advice would you give to other young women considering a career in software engineering or tech in general? Try it out, I don't think this is a career you know you will love or hate until you try it. If you find learning new things and problem-solving this is the career for you. Technology is constantly evolving, and you will never know everything. This for me is what drew me in as I love learning new things and I will never truly be an expert on everything in tech. Whereas some people would find this quite daunting and over-whelming.

What are you most excited about when it comes to the STEM outreach workshop Savient is delivering to local schools in 2025, and what role do you hope to play in it? One study that I mentioned in my dissertation detailed only 10% of the studies indicated that girls' poor participation in STEM could be attributed to personal factors and 61% to environmental factors. My hope is that I can encourage students regardless of gender to be engaged in STEM subjects, but I just think if maybe I'd have had seen someone with crazy hair and piercings enjoying a STEM subject, I'd have given it a little more thought.

When you're not coding or working, what do you enjoy doing in your free time? I'm someone who rotates through hobbies I find, there are certain days where I'm feeling spiritual and enjoy sitting down with my tarot cards, on my creative days I love reading, I also love Pilates and yoga. I'm someone who needs a hobby to slow down after work.

Looking back at your journey from university to now, what's one piece of advice you would give to your past self? Give yourself some grace. So much happens in these years and you will grow and change so much and it's so important to slow down and really enjoy where you're at because if you don't you will crash and burnout. You don't have to feel guilty about needing a break.